

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action mailed on January 7, 2009 which has been reviewed and carefully considered. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the amendments made above and the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 4-18 and 20-25 remain in this application, where claims 3 and 9 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 11, 14, 19 and 25 are independent.

By means of the present amendment, the current Abstract has been deleted and substituted with the enclosed New Abstract which better conforms to U.S. practice. Further, the specification has been amended to correct certain informalities.

By means of the present amendment, claims 1-2, 4-18 and 20-25 have been amended for non-statutory reasons, such as for better form including beginning the dependent claims with 'The' instead of 'A', and deleting reference numerals typically used in European practice that are known to not limit the scope of the claims. Such

amendments to claims 1-2, 4-18 and 20-25 were not made in order to address issues of patentability and Applicants respectfully reserve all rights under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

In the Office Action, claims 18, 23 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph for a certain informality. In response, claim 23 has been amended to remove the noted informality. Further, it is respectfully submitted that "at least one portion of the layer" is clear and definite, where the ordinary meaning of portion is something less than whole such as less than the whole/entire layer. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 14 is allowed and that claims 3-9, 11-12 and 19-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claim 14 is allowed and that claims 3-9, 11-12 and 19-20 contain patentable subject matter.

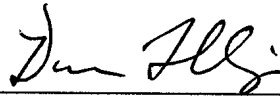
By means of the present amendment, independent claims 1 and 18 have been amended to include the features of allowable claims 3 and 19, respectively, which have been canceled without prejudice. In

addition, claim 11 has been rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that independent claims 1, 11 and 18 be allowed. In addition, it is respectfully requested that claims 2, 4-10, 12-13, 15-17 and 20-24 also be allowed at least based on their dependence from independent claims 1, 11 and 18 as well as their individually patentable elements.

In addition, Applicants deny any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicants reserve the right to submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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